

REMARKS

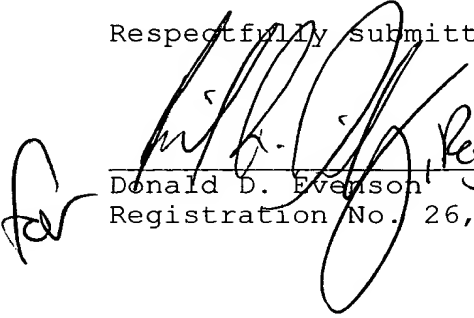
Claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 11-21 remain in this application, while claims 3 and 10 are canceled. Reconsideration of the application is again requested.

U.S. Patent 3,857,268 to Kajiwaka relied upon by the Examiner teaches changing shift positions of work rolls when the width of a strip is varied. The Kajiwaka patent further teaches, even when the strip width is not varied, changing, not fixing, the shift positions during rolling. Rolling while changing the shift positions may consist, for instance, of a cyclic shifting method which performs rolling while cyclically shifting rolls in their axial directions within a desired movement range (20 mm, for example). The rolls, therefore, have positions which are moved in a certain range and are not fixed. The present invention, by contrast, proposes fixing the shift positions of work rolls during rolling when the width of a strip is kept unchanged. The independent claims appearing above reflect this distinguishing feature. Neither the Kajiwaka patent nor either of the other patents discussed in the Amendment After Final Rejection filed July 9, 2003 suggests the feature mentioned, and

it is respectfully submitted that each of independent claims 1, 6, 9, and 14-21 is patentable. Dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 11-13 are patentable as well.

Respectfully submitted,

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